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SPECIAL SECTION

DEFENSE

Intelligence post-9-11 requires commitment, funds

By Rep. Bob Barr

"If something can go wrong, it will."

— *Murphy's Law*

"The country from which we withdraw our intelligence capability, is the one area in which serious trouble will flare soon thereafter."

— *Barr's Corollary to Murphy's Law as Applied to Foreign Intelligence*



[THOMAS BUTLER](#)
Rep. Bob Barr (R-Ga.)

In the aftermath of virtually every major military victory, there are serious challenges confronting the victor; challenges presented the prevailing side directly resulting from the changes wrought by the military victory. How we meet those challenges largely determines whether we face subsequent military conflicts and our chances for success therein. This pattern presented itself in the aftermath of both world wars, with each eventually leading to another conflict; World War II flowed from World War I, and the Korean Conflict resulted directly from the Cold War that arose from the still-smoldering ashes of World War II.

Even on a less-dramatic scale, we see this pattern. The downfall of the Soviet Empire from 1989 to 1991 presented a clear challenge to America; and our unwillingness to meet it correctly has led to subsequent problems and tragedy. We must not allow the challenges made apparent by the terrorist attacks against us on Sept. 11 to go unmet, and by doing, cause further damage.


The demise of the Soviet Union caused many to hail a "peace dividend" — huge sums of money theretofore spent on defense and intelligence resources designed to meet the Soviet challenge in all its parts, now "freed up" to spend on domestic programs. Aside from the obvious naiveté of this view, it caused a pronounced cutback in the one area of federal spending that would directly determine whether we could foresee and therefore defend against terrorist attacks — foreign intelligence.

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In the 1990s, as a result of this irresponsible search for a “peace dividend,” we cut back intelligence personnel between 20 and 25 percent. The 1993 debacle in Somalia was but one direct and immediate result; other examples are longer-term and may not have yet manifested themselves. It was not until the 1999 supplemental pushed in 1998 by then-Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) that our Intelligence Community had the resources to “plus up” and ready itself for what would eventually turn out to be a remarkably rapid and successful military response to Sept. 11.

To make this initial military success in Afghanistan truly successful over the long haul, and to give ourselves a high likelihood of successfully thwarting future terrorist attacks, several aspects of our intelligence policy and capability must be kept in mind:

- Better coordination and dissemination is essential.
- Absolute objectivity of the final intelligence “product” reaching our policy makers (ultimately the president) must be insisted on.
- Strengthening the role and power of the CIA, the only component of the Intelligence Community (IC) purposefully conceived as objective and detached from parochial concerns, is critical.
- We must develop and maintain a truly worldwide intelligence presence. Al-Qaeda’s ability to train, develop, and arm its terrorist cells, in small, seemingly unimportant backwater countries (such as Somalia before 1993), contributed directly to its ability to strike at U.S. interests and institutions a few years later.
- Funding the IC adequately every single year, regardless of the threat du jour, is an essential “investment in the future.” Without having made such an investment in Afghanistan in the last several years, and absent correct decisions by the IC to maintain contacts and sources in that country throughout the 1990s, our armed forces could not have responded as they did when ordered by the president to go into that area, within mere days of Sept. 11.
- There is no substitute for human intelligence (HUMINT) on the ground. Technological collection and dissemination supports HUMINT, but can never replace it.
- Keep analysts in place, rather than “rotate” them through from country to country or assignment to assignment; in order to develop and maintain expertise on all corners of the globe. Again, CIA is the only component of the IC capable of doing this.
- We must maintain the ability to mount covert actions — something less than military action but more than diplomacy. A president without such options is a commander-in-chief severely limited in his ability to succeed. Covert action itself requires a vast infrastructure, and we must be ready to fund and maintain it.
- The nature of 21st century warfare, with its emphasis on precision targeting to take out the enemy’s capability to wage conflict, rather than depending on raw power to overwhelm, requires good, constant, objective and accurate intelligence.
- Science and technology allows us — as well as the bad guys — to develop new measures and counter-measures so rapidly that a clear focus on thinking ahead of technology beyond where the technologists are looking, must be a conscious, funded component of our intelligence policy.



We know there will be future terrorist attacks against our interests, our homeland, our citizens and our military. We can dramatically reduce the likelihood they will succeed, however, by ensuring we have and maintain a truly global comprehensive, professional, coordinated and objective foreign intelligence capability, headed by the CIA.

Rep. Barr, a Republican from Georgia, worked for the CIA before serving in Congress.